



CROATIA

Statement by

Ms. Helena Marković
Third Secretary

at

the First Committee 80th Session - Cluster 6: Regional Disarmament and Security

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Mr. Chair,

Drawing on lessons from the Homeland War, Croatia approaches disarmament and international security with the utmost responsibility, maintaining a strong commitment to arms control and confidence-building measures as instruments for lasting peace.

In this context, the Sub-Regional Arms Control Agreement, signed in 1996 as part of the Dayton Peace Accords, is as an established mechanism for arms control and confidence-building. Over three decades, its implementation has fostered transparency and cooperation among the parties, engaging 1,300 assistants and 260 observers from 30 OSCE participating States.

Building on regional security efforts, Croatia prioritizes comprehensive demining under its National Mine Action Program, fully complying with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and aims to achieve mine-free status by March 2026. Annual demining costs exceed 70 million euros, highlighting both the scale of the challenge and the importance of mine risk education and public awareness.

Sharing Europe's responsibility for peace and recovery in Ukraine, Croatia contributed 13.2 million euros to humanitarian demining, hosted the International Donor's Conference on humanitarian demining in Ukraine, and provided expertise through equipment, education and capacity-building projects, urging the international community to strengthen collective efforts to protect civilians and ensure safe recovery in affected areas.

In line with its humanitarian and security efforts, Croatia has reduced small arms and light weapons, earning international recognition as a model of good practice, and remains committed to international frameworks fostering transparency, cooperation, and stability.

Nonetheless, small arms remain a grave threat due to their widespread availability and ease of use, exploited by terrorists and criminal groups, causing over half a million deaths annually. The 2025 European Union Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment identifies the neighbouring Western Balkans as a key source of illicit firearms trafficking. The conflict in Ukraine further risks creating a post-conflict environment that could lead to increased arms proliferation across wider region. In response, Croatia promotes regional initiatives for safer arms management.

To conclude, a safer and more secure world is a shared goal and responsibility of all states.

Thank you.